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Small Arms Training
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1942

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By Command of the Army Council,

L. Darnley.

THE WAR OFFICE,
9th May, 1942.

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PISTOL TRAINING

GENERAL

1. *The object of weapon training*

The sole object of weapon training is to teach all ranks the most efficient way of handling their weapons in order to kill the enemy. Instructors will always bear this fact in mind and will continually impress it upon those whom they instruct.

2. The occasions when the pistol is likely to be used are rare, but when it has to be used the object must be quick and accurate shooting.

3. Effective shooting must be based on the characteristics of the weapon, which are :—

i. *Short barrel.*—This necessitates the pistol being normally fired at close range, i.e. 15 yds. or under. Fire effect may be obtained up to 50 yds. using cover. When fighting in enclosed country, e.g. villages, woods, trench systems, etc., surprise targets can be very quickly engaged.

ii. *High rate of fire.*—At close range men will shoot instantly by sense of direction. Under such conditions the firer is aided by the high rate of fire, the speed with which one or more effective shots can be fired being more important than the close grouping of the shots.

4. To fight with the pistol men must be trained to think quickly and to act with determination and initiative in order to outwit the enemy. The use of either hand must be taught and practised. Good practice can be obtained by making use of any form of existing trench system or buildings for handling the pistol in cramped localities.

5. If an individual can fire equally effectively with either hand, then, in working round cover, the pistol may be carried in the outside hand in such a manner that an opponent can be killed without exposing more than the hand and head. A change of direction will necessitate changing hands, and this change should be practised until it can be done cleanly and quickly.

6. The pistol should be reloaded whenever the opportunity offers, and an advance should never be resumed with less than two or three live rounds in the cylinder.

7. *Safety precautions.*—At the commencement of each lesson, pistols, drill cartridges, and pouches must be inspected, and the squad must be questioned on the safety precautions.

8. A few minutes at the end of each lesson should be set aside for exercising men in strengthening the muscles directly used in gripping and firing the pistol. (See page 11.)

9. Instructors must appreciate that, while the lessons are designed to be taught in one period, more time will be necessary in order to permit of sufficient practice to obtain proficiency.

LESSON 1.—CLEANING, READY POSITION, LOADING AND UNLOADING

Instructor's notes

Stores :—

Pistol; drill cartridges; cleaning rods; flannelette; oil; figure 2 target at 10 yds.

During the lesson the names of parts will be mentioned as the pistol is being handled (see Fig. 1). To inspect pistols for

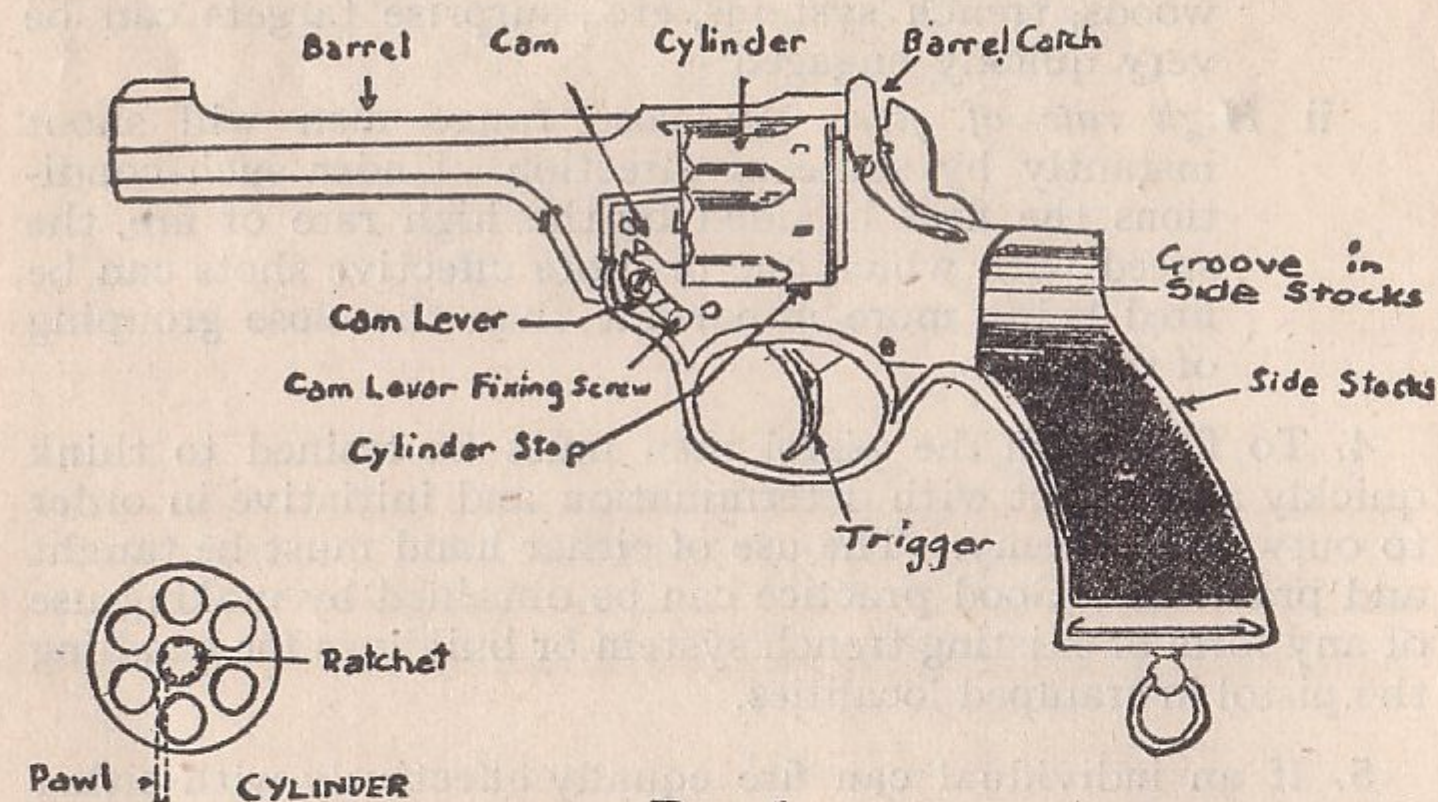


FIG. 1

safety prior to any lesson, men must be taught on the command "For inspection, draw pistols" to act as follows :—

Draw the pistol from the case with the right hand, grip the barrel with the left hand, keeping the muzzle pointing

to the ground. Press down the barrel catch with the thumb of the right hand and open the pistol. After inspection close the pistol and return it to its case. Button up the case.

In addition, the following safety precautions must be read aloud on all pistol training parades until each man knows them thoroughly :—

- i. The pistol will always be proved when given to or accepted from another individual.
- ii. The pistol will always be kept in the case, except when drawn for a definite purpose.
- iii. No indiscriminate snapping will be allowed; snapping at another man's eye will not be practised with drill cartridges in the pistol.
- iv. When out of the case and not in actual use, the pistol will always be carried at the "ready" position and not hanging at the side pointing to the ground.
- v. In order to prevent injury to the pawl or ratchet, the pistol will never be opened or closed with the hammer cocked. If the pistol is loaded, a premature explosion may occur.

1. Introduction

Explain briefly paras. 1 and 2 under heading "General," above.

2. Cleaning

Explain and demonstrate, squad imitating :—

- i. Remove cylinder by partly unscrewing the cam-lever fixing screw (fully unscrew with .455) and pressing down cam-lever. Using a piece of flannelette which will fit the bore tightly, on the rod, clean the barrel from the muzzle end. Clean the chambers in a similar manner. When clean, oil the barrel and chamber with oily flannelette. Clean all remaining parts with oily rag, taking care to remove all fouling from the pawl, ratchet, and cylinder stop. After a gas attack clean as for rifle.

NOTE.—If possible the bore and chambers should be dry before firing.

- ii. Ensure that the number on the cylinder corresponds to the number on the body and barrel, press down the cam-lever, and replace cylinder. Ensure that it is fully home and secured and tighten up the cam-lever fixing screw. Close pistol and return to the case.

3. Ready position. (See Fig. 2)

Explain and demonstrate with squad imitating:—

- i. To adopt the "ready" position, draw the pistol from the case and bring it in front of the body, muzzle pointing to the front, forefinger on the trigger. Advance either foot slightly. The knees should be

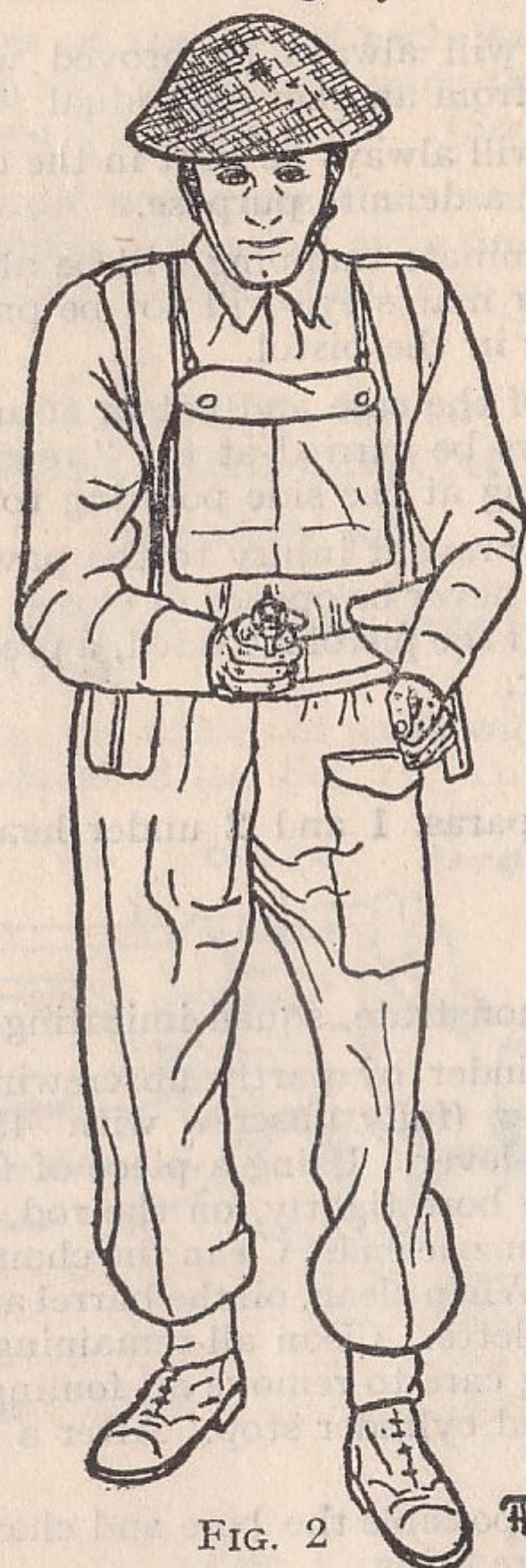


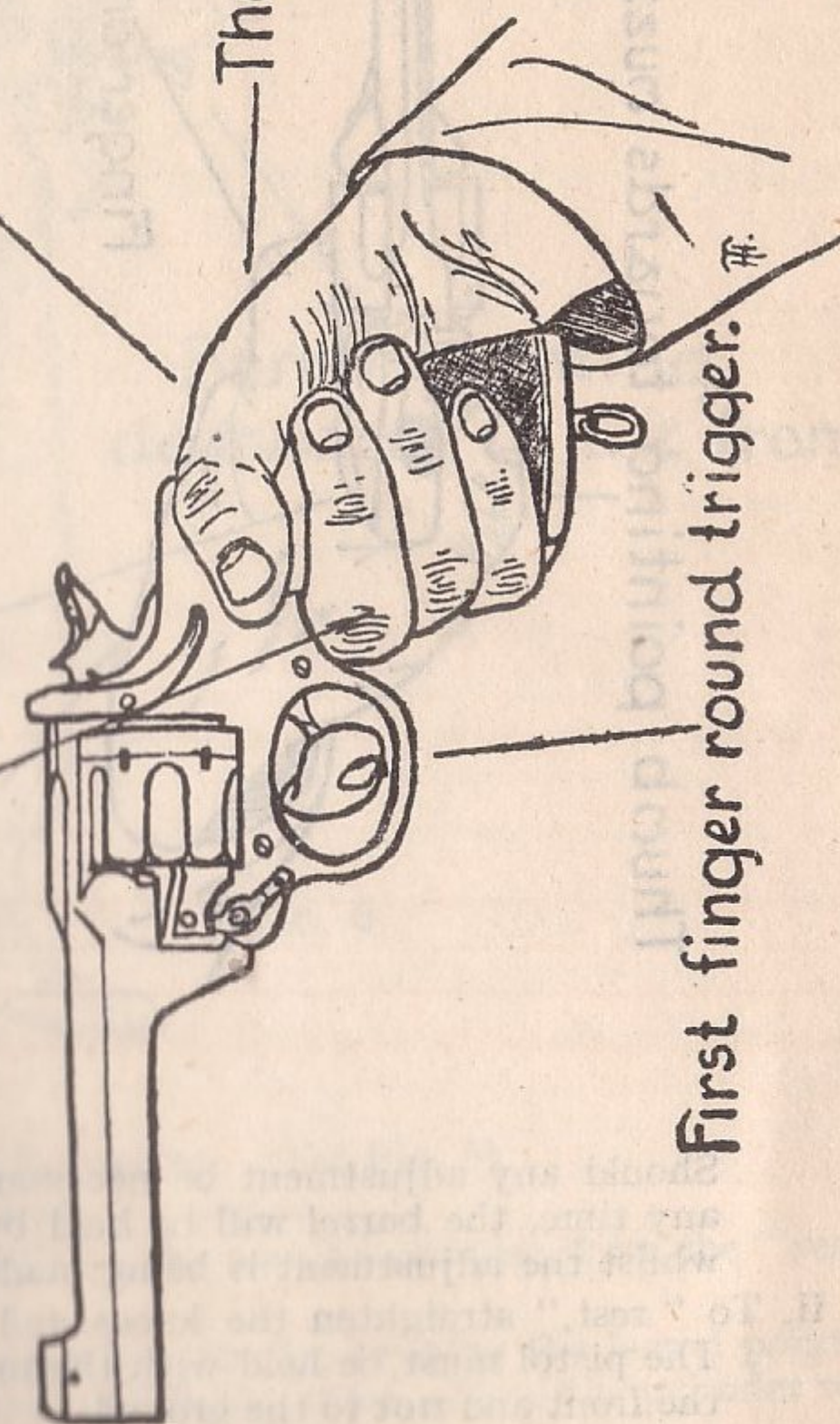
FIG. 2

slightly bent, with the weight of the body forward. The body **must** be square to the target, and the hand and pistol be held in the centre of the body. The position of the feet is immaterial. The butt of the pistol must be gripped as firmly as possible (see

2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers clasping butt.

Hand as high up the butt as possible.

Thumb exerting inwards pressure.



First finger round trigger.

FIG. 3

Figs. 3 and 4), and so held that when the pistol is raised it is in alignment with the target for direction. The position must be one of aggression and determination. Emphasize the importance of gripping the pistol correctly before drawing it from the case.

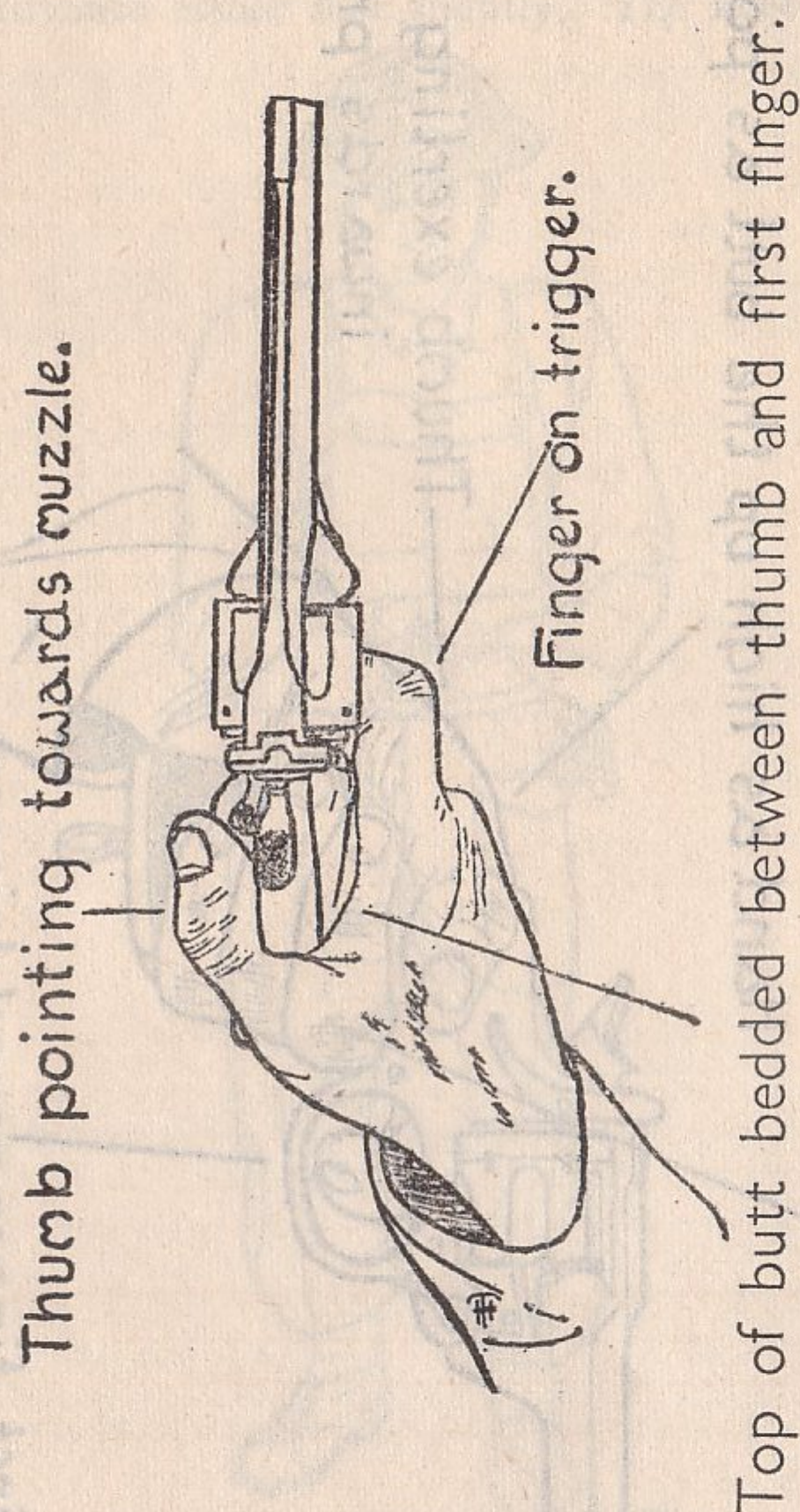


FIG. 4

Should any adjustment be necessary to the grip at any time, the barrel will be held by the other hand whilst the adjustment is being made.

- ii. To "rest," straighten the knees and relax the body. The pistol must be held with the muzzle pointing to the front and **not** to the ground.

4. Practise squad drawing pistol from the case and adopting the "ready" position with either hand.

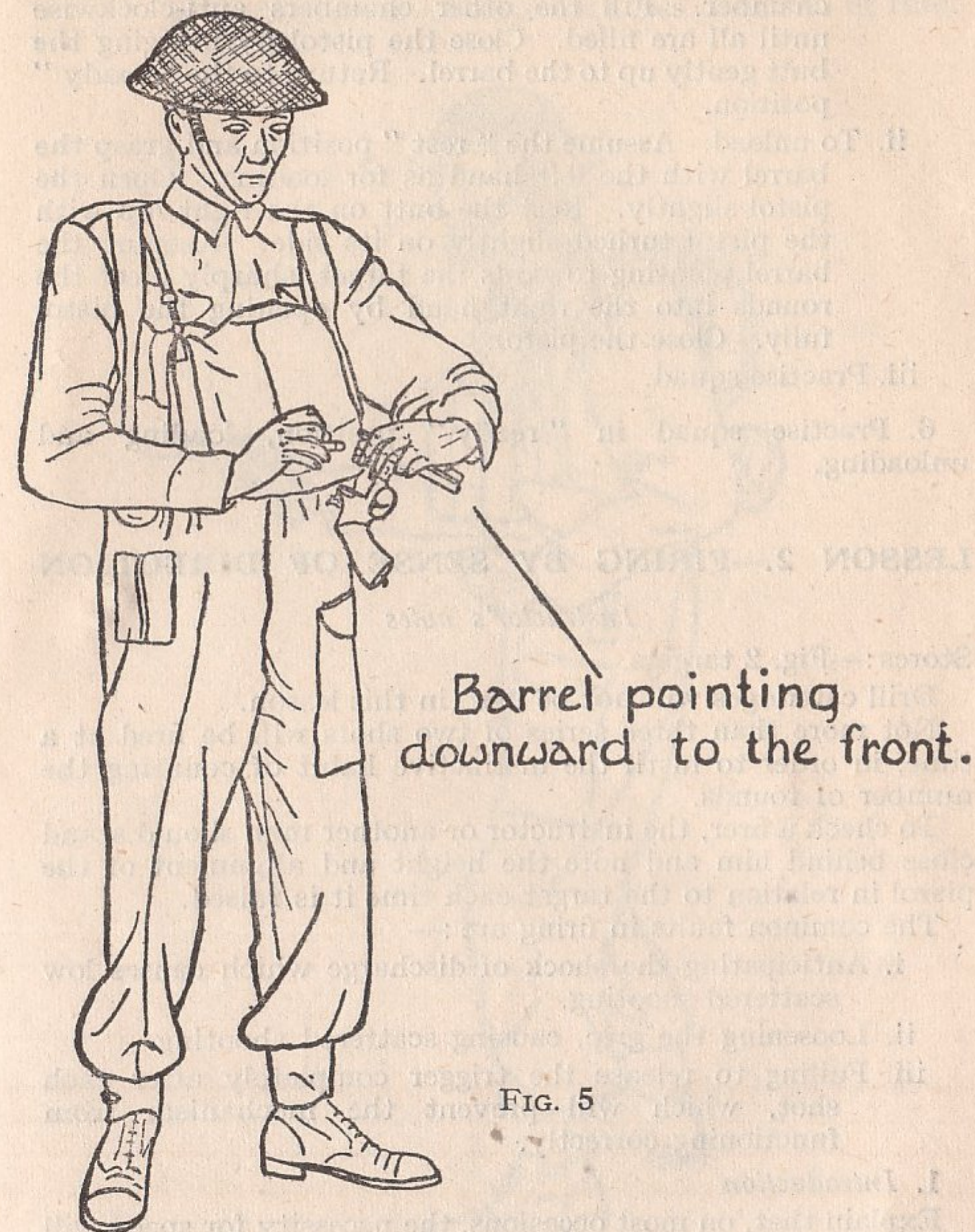


FIG. 5

5. Loading and unloading. (See Fig. 5)

Assume the "ready" position.

Explain and demonstrate, squad imitating, from the "rest" position:—

- i. Open the pistol as taught, keeping the barrel pointing downwards and to the front. Hold the cylinder with

the left hand to prevent it from rotating, take one or two rounds and place the first one in the 10 o'clock chamber. Fill the other chambers anti-clockwise until all are filled. Close the pistol by bringing the butt gently up to the barrel. Return to the "ready" position.

ii. To unload. Assume the "rest" position and grasp the barrel with the left hand as for loading. Open the pistol slightly. Rest the butt on the right hip with the pistol turned slightly on its side. Keeping the barrel pointing towards the target, sharply eject the rounds into the right hand by opening the pistol fully. Close the pistol.

iii. Practise squad.

6. Practise squad in "ready" position, loading and unloading.

LESSON 2.—FIRING BY SENSE OF DIRECTION

Instructor's notes

Stores:—Fig. 2 targets.

Drill cartridges will **not** be used in this lesson.

Not more than three series of two shots will be fired at a time, in order to instil the instinctive habit of counting the number of rounds.

To check a firer, the instructor or another man should stand close behind him and note the height and alignment of the pistol in relation to the target each time it is raised.

The common faults in firing are:—

- i. Anticipating the shock of discharge which causes low scattered shooting.
- ii. Loosening the grip, causing scattered shooting.
- iii. Failing to release the trigger completely after each shot, which will prevent the mechanism from functioning correctly.

1. Introduction

Explain that, on most occasions, the necessity for speed will require the pistol to be fired by sense of direction. Shooting by sense of direction requires the attention of the firer to be concentrated on his target the whole time. The basis of this type of shooting is:—

- i. The firer must face his target squarely.
- ii. He must be determined to kill his opponent. To make certain of killing, two shots will always be fired in

quick succession. The firer must count his rounds as he fires them, to ensure that he will know when to re-load. Never advance with less than two or three rounds in the cylinder.

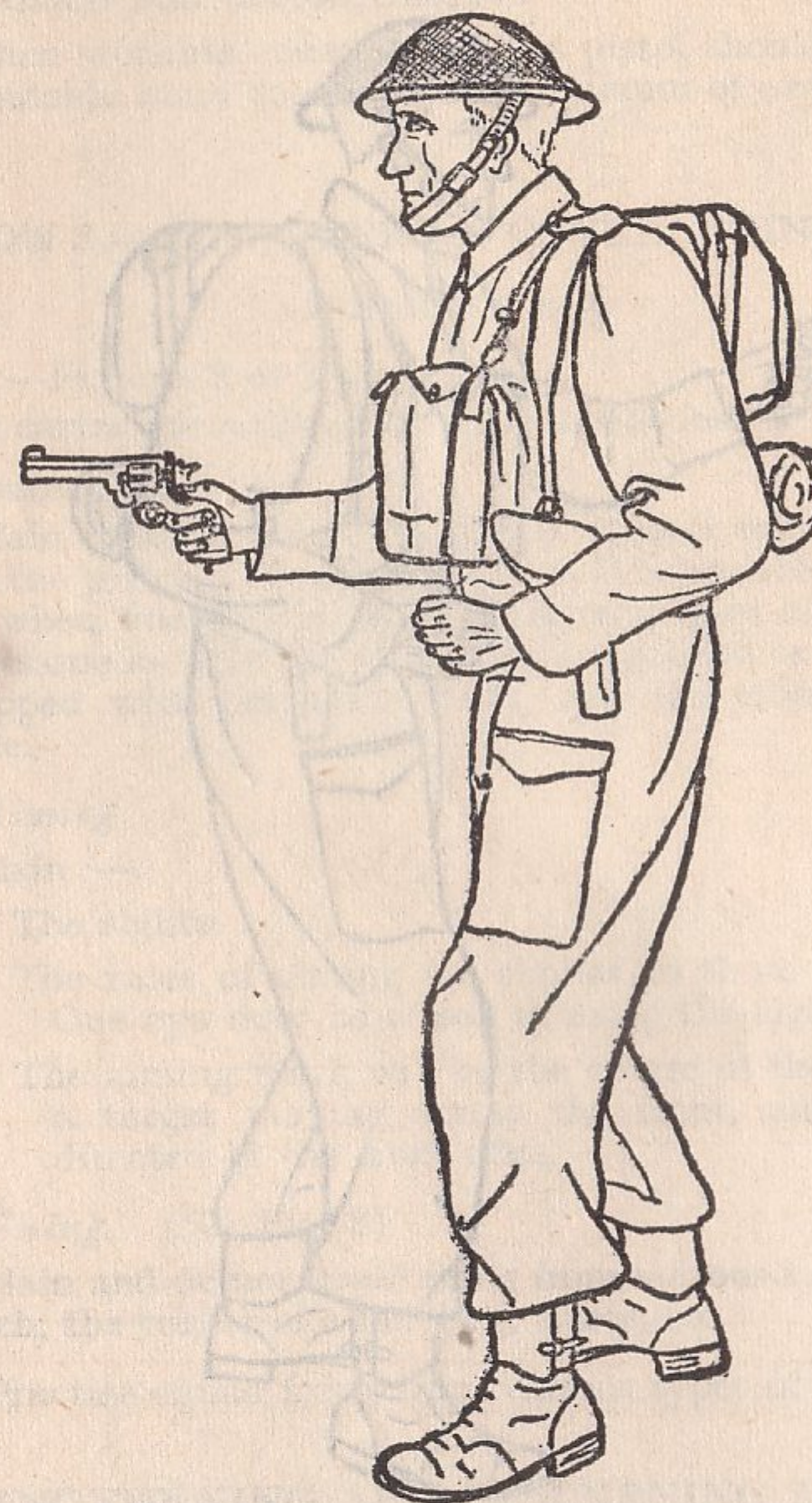


FIG. 6.—POINT BLANK RANGE.

2. Firing. (See Figs. 6 and 7)

Explain and demonstrate from the "ready" position:—

Concentrate on the centre of the target. Gripping the butt of the pistol as firmly as possible, raise it **quickly** in front of

the centre of the body, keeping the arm slightly bent. The height to which the pistol is raised will depend on the range to the target. For example, at point blank range (under 10 yds.),

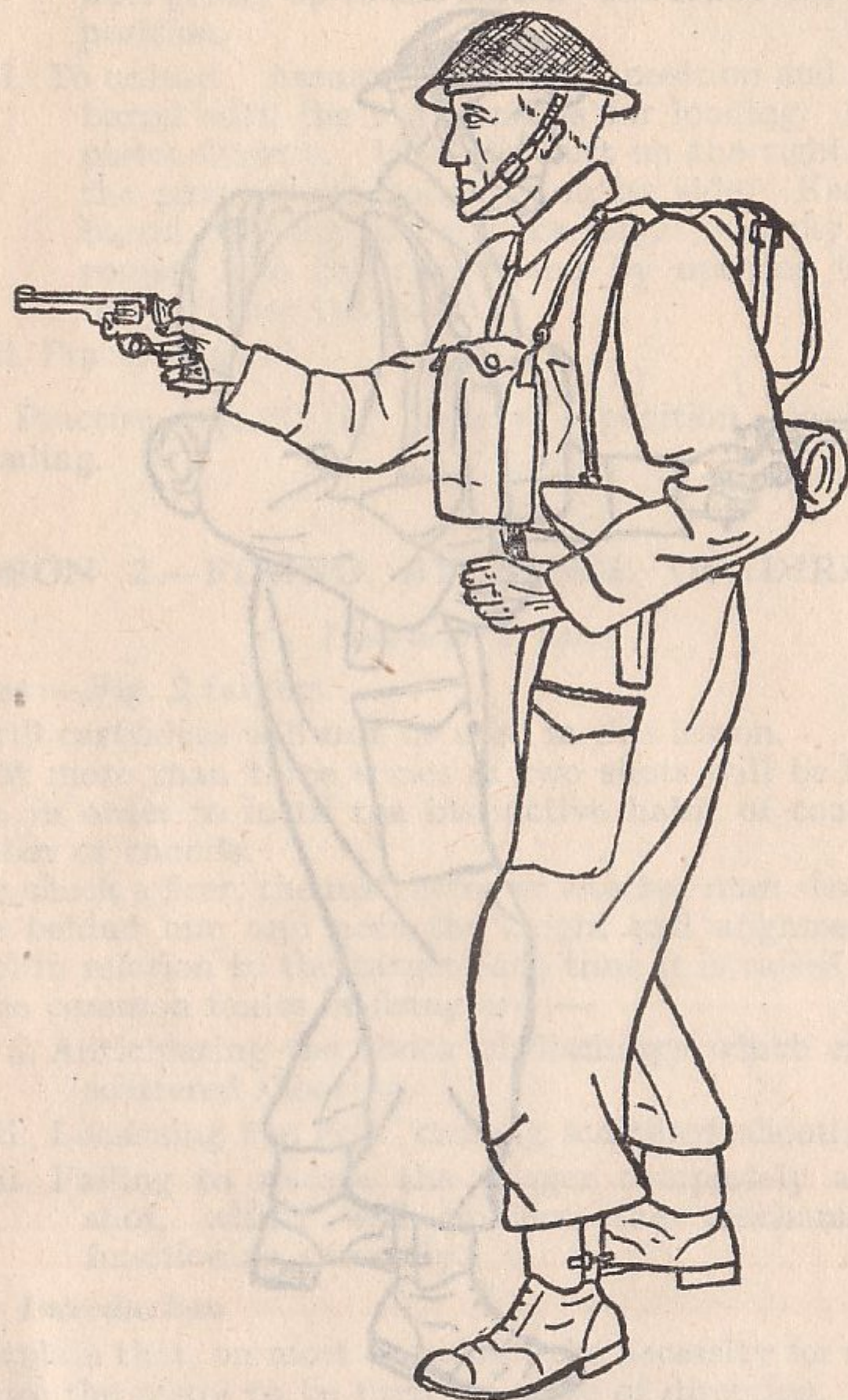


FIG. 7.—OVER 10 YARDS.

it need not be raised above the waist. At 10 yds. and over, it will be necessary to raise it higher. Fire two shots in quick succession, then return to the "ready" position.

Repeat this twice.

3. Practise squad, one rank at a time, at varying distances up to 15 yds., using each hand. The other rank checking.

4. Practise squad drawing the pistol from the case and firing.

5. Explain and demonstrate :—

When working round cover the pistol should be held in the outside hand to ensure the minimum of exposure.

LESSON 3.—FIRING FROM COVER, USING SIGHTS

Instructor's notes

Stores :—Figures 2 or 3 targets.

Drill cartridges will **not** be used in this lesson.

1. *Introduction*

Explain that occasions may arise when it will be desirable to aim the pistol ; for instance, when it is possible to use both hands when firing from cover. The principles of using cover are the same as with the rifle. The firing hand or wrist should be gripped with the other hand, and the elbows rested if possible.

2. *Aiming*

Explain :—

- i. The sights.
- ii. The rules of aiming are similar to those for the rifle. One eye may be closed in using the sights.
- iii. The aiming mark will be the centre of the target. At a target moving across the front, aim should be directed at the front edge.

3. *Firing.* (See Fig. 8)

Explain and demonstrate firing from various types of cover, a trench, the corner of a building, a tree, etc.

4. Practise squad firing from various types of cover.

STRENGTHENING AND QUICKENING EXERCISES

1. The undermentioned examples are provided as a guide for instructors. They may be varied at the discretion of the instructor, so long as the objects of strengthening the gripping muscles of either hand, and speeding up the firing of the pistol are kept in mind.



FIG. 8.—FIRING, GRIPPING WRIST.



FIG. 9.—FIRING, GRIPPING HAND.

2. Instructor demonstrates and explains, squad imitating :—

One—Thrust both arms out to the full extent, backs of hands uppermost, fingers outstretched. All muscles in the hands, wrists and arms braced.

Two—Turn hands over slowly until palms are upwards.

Three—Clench the fists *slowly*, keeping the muscles braced up.

Four—Bring the hands back sharply until they are below the shoulders. Repeat.

3. Point out some object within 15 yds.—then with the squad's pistols in the cases or on the hand—give command "Fire". Emphasize speed and give practice, including change of direction and firing two shots.



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